



OSWER Innovations Pilot

Unified Phased Site Assessments

The Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response (OSWER) initiated a series of innovative pilots to test new ideas and strategies for environmental and public health protection to make OSWER programs more efficient, effective, and user-friendly. A small amount of money is set aside to fund creative proposals. The creative projects test approaches to waste minimization, energy recovery, recycling, land revitalization, and homeland security that may be replicated across various sectors, industries, communities, and regions. We hope these pilots will pave the way for programmatic and policy recommendations by demonstrating the environmental and economic benefits of creative, innovative approaches to the difficult environmental challenges we face today.

BACKGROUND

Each program within EPA's Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response (OSWER) conducts and describes their environmental assessment process differently. Yet the overall objectives and much of the information collected is the same or similar. Further, the general public conducts environmental assessments differently than any OSWER program. The assessment standards set by the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) are generally used by the public and industry. In addition, many contaminated sites may potentially be addressed through more than one OSWER program, which creates an ongoing challenge in transferring useful information about a site from one program within OSWER to another.

OSWER has envisioned a "One Cleanup Program" approach where all OSWER programs use consistent methods.

PILOT APPROACH

U.S. EPA Region 3, in partnership with OSWER Headquarters offices will develop and test whether a single, draft environmental assessment tool can be used by all programs within OSWER and will be easily understood and used by the general public, if they wish. The Unified Phase Assessments (UPA) will be composed of three parts. The first part will be a single page that will be a quick reference page and provide key information about the site at a glance. The second part will be the main body of the assessment and contains assessment elements common to all initial assessments

conducted in OSWER programs. The last part will be attachments that contain program-specific information. The attachments will target major elements specific to each program. Each program-specific attachment will include existing guidance developed by the parent OSWER program.

INNOVATION

A single assessment tool that is applicable across all OSWER programs and that is private-sector friendly is an innovative approach to environmental assessments. An Unified Phase Assessment would be a major step in implementing OSWER's "One Cleanup Program" approach.

BENEFITS

A single, unified environmental assessment platform that is employed by all offices within OSWER and that is easy for the public and industry to understand will result in improved understanding and communication between EPA, the general public, state environmental programs, environmental contractors, developers, and other stakeholders. An UPA also could significantly reduce the cost of doing business within OSWER and by stakeholders since an UPA conducted by one program could be used directly by any other program within OSWER without the need for duplicating the efforts already covered in the initial UPA.

CONTACTS

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For additional information, visit the EPA OSWER
Innovations web site at: www.epa.gov/oswer/IWG.htm.